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Committee on Relations with the Host Country

Letter dated 28 December 1998 from the Minister-Counsellor for Host Country Affairs of the United States Mission to the United Nations addressed to the Assistant Secretary-General for Legal Affairs

I refer to your letter dated 17 December 1998, in which you asked me to look into the matter of a visa request in favour of Ambassador Muhammad Abdullah Al-Doory, who was to come to New York as a part of the Iraqi delegation to the fifty-third session of the General Assembly. Nine of the 10 visas requested for the delegation were issued without any problem. Ambassador Al-Doory's visa was in fact also authorized albeit after some delay, but he did not come to the United States Embassy in Amman to have it placed in his passport. The authorization was delayed solely because the Permanent Mission of Iraq to the United Nations was either unwilling or unable to provide the host country with information which would have overcome some initial confusion apparently owing to divergent transliterations of his name from Arabic to English.

Ambassador Al-Doory's name appeared in a note verbale addressed to the United States Mission by the Permanent Mission of Iraq listing 10 members of the Iraqi delegation requiring visas to come for the fifty-third regular session of the General Assembly. In that note, however, the ambassador's name was transliterated as Mr. Al-Douri. On 17 September 1998, rather than on 10 September as stated in Ambassador Hamdoon's letter to the Secretary-General, an officer of the United States Mission called the Permanent Mission of Iraq to inform it that the members of the delegation should proceed to Amman for their visas, but that additional details were required in order better to identify Mr. Al-Douri so as to secure approval for his official visa. As the Permanent Mission of Iraq was either unwilling or unable to provide such information, Mr. Al-Douri was advised to proceed to Amman with the rest of the delegation for a visa interview at which the necessary clarifications could be sought. Following that interview, which took place in Amman on 22 October, the United States authorities were able to clearly identify the applicant, and the visa for Ambassador Muhammed Al-Doory was authorized on 4 November 1998. The ambassador, however, never appeared at the United States Embassy in Amman to obtain his visa.

The United States Government is well aware of its obligations under the United Nations Headquarters Agreement and takes those obligations most seriously. Had the Permanent Mission of Iraq been willing or able to provide the information sought by the

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host country to clarify the specific identity of the delegate, Ambassador Al-Doory's visa would have been ready along with the visas for the other members of the delegation.

I trust that this information will be helpful in assisting the Secretary-General in replying to the letter the Permanent Representative of Iraq addressed to him on 6 November 1998. I further would request that the text of the present letter be circulated as a document of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country.

(*Signed*) Robert C. **Moller**
Minister-Counsellor for Host Country Affairs